

☞ **Might WILDFIRE knock at your door?** ☞

Each year wildfire destroys cabins and moves into towns burning homes and other buildings. Homes are generally not fireproof but we can help protect them from wildfire by creating space around them that fire has a hard time entering. This area is called “defensible space.” It’s a landscape designed to protect a building—and the firemen battling the oncoming fire. Properly designed, your landscaping discourages fire from moving from plant to plant and reduces the amount of flammable vegetation nearest your home—not allowing the fire’s flames to reach your house. This will give your house and firefighters the best chance to survive.

DESIGN FIRE RESISTANT LANDSCAPING

A fire resistant landscape can look well manicured or natural. In general it puts natural barriers to fire—empty space and less-flammable materials—closest to your home and coniferous or resinous plants further away from your house. Creating a mosaic of fire-resistant plants, well spaced, will slow the spread of wildfire.

See the Video: Fire Free—Get in the Zone
Helpful Websites: www.firewise.org
www.fema.gov

To create a fire resistant landscape:

- ☞ Increase the moisture content of vegetation,
- ☞ Shorten plant height near buildings,
- ☞ Arrange the plants to maximize fire resistance,
- ☞ Use non-flammable barriers to separate plants and your house from plants, and
- ☞ Plant fire resistant vegetation.

CREATE HORIZONTAL AND VERTICAL SPACING

Empty space between plants can slow the spread of fire. Plant grass and low ground covers or arrange rock gardens nearest your house. Plant shrubs and trees at least 30 feet from buildings. Clear brush and low branches 300 feet from your home in particularly fire prone areas.

Group plants of similar heights together and leave a space of six feet or more between shorter shrubs and the limbs of trees to avoid creating a “fire ladder” by which fire can climb from lower plants to taller trees. You can also use masonry or stone to separate plants of differing heights.

Look at the size of each tree and the length of its branches—larger trees need greater spacing. Plant trees at least ten feet apart.

House on a hill?

Remember, fire creates updrafts and moves quickly uphill—space plants farther apart, and farther from your house.

MAINTENANCE

Plants survive fire best if kept moist and healthy. Water your yard frequently. Prune and thin shrubs, trees, and other plants to minimize the fuel load. Removing dead leaves from under all plants reduces fuel and eliminates places for sparks to collect and ignite.

PLANT FIRE RESISTANT PLANTS

All plants will burn under extreme dryness, however plants burn at different intensities and duration. Some plants have natural defenses against fire. Fire resistant plants burn at relatively low intensity, slow rates of spread, and with short flame lengths.

Characteristics of Fire Resistant Plants:

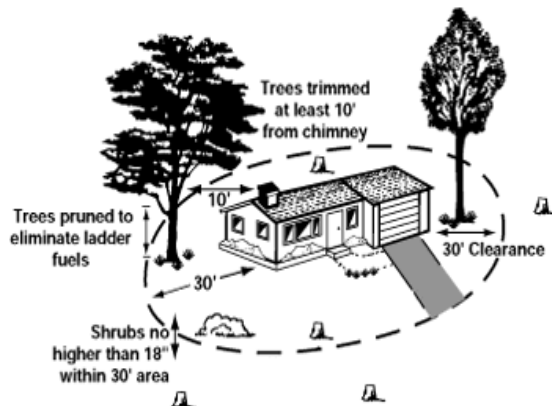
- ☞ Little Accumulation of Dead Material
- ☞ Non-Resinous
- ☞ High Live Fuel Moisture
- ☞ Low Volume
- ☞ Drought Tolerant
- ☞ Require Little Care
- ☞ Need Prolonged Heat to Ignite

Plants for Wildfire Safe Landscaping



Trees

- Green Ash [*Fraxinus pennsylvanica*]
30-60' <8500'
- Crabapple [*Malus spp.*]
12-25' elevation varies
hardy
- Honeylocust [*Gleditsia triacanthos*]
35-70' <6500'
- Willow [*Salix spp.*]
size & elevation varies
invasive roots
- Narrowleaf Cottonwood [*Populus angustifolia*]
40-60' <5000'
winter hardy
- Hackberry [*Celtis spp.*]
40-60' <4500-7000
hardy, drought tolerant
- Box Elder [*Acer negundo*]
- Amur chokecherry [*Prunus maackii*]
25-50' <6500



Shrubs

- Serviceberry [*Amelanchier alnifolia*]
1-20' <10000'
- Barberry [*Berberis spp.*]
4-6' <7500'
- Red Osier dogwood [*Cornus sericea*]
3-19'
- Cotoneaster [*Cotoneaster dammeri*]
6-10" <7500'
- Forsythia [*Forsythia x intermedia*]
10' <8000'
- Oregon Grape [*Mahonia aquifolium*]
3-6' <8000'
- Virginia creeper [*Parthenocissus quiniquifolia*]
35' spread
- Russian sage [*Perovskia atriplicifolia*]
3-4' <8500
heat tolerant
- Cinquefoil [*Potentilla fruticosa*]
2-3' <10000, hardy
- Sand Cherry [*Prunus besseyi*]
3-6' <9000'
heat/cold/drought tolerant
- Skunkbush sumac [*Rhus trilobata*]
2-8' <9000'
hardy, needs drainage
- Wood's rose [*Rosa woodsii*]
1-6' <10000' hardy
- Elderberry [*Sambucus spp.*]
8-10' all
- Lilac [*Syringa spp.*]
15-30' <8500

Perennials/Ground Cover

- Common thrift [*Armeria maritime*]
6x12"
- Snow in Summer [*Cerastium tomentosum*]
6x24" <10000
- Coreopsis [*Coreopsis auriculata*]
5x24" <7000
- Ice Plant [*Delosperma spp.*]
3x36"
- Wild Strawberry [*Fragaria chiloensis*]
6x18" <10,000
- Daylily [*Hemerocallis spp.*]
12x24" 8-10,000'
- Blue flax [*Linum perenne*]
8x14" <8500
- Red hot poker [*Kniphofia uvaria*]
3x6' <8000
- Moss pink [*Phlox subulata*]
6x24" <7500
- Creeping thyme [*Thymus praecox*]
6x12" <8500
- Periwinkle [*Vinca major*]
15x36" <6500

Talk to your local nursery for more suggestions on plants that will work in your yard ☞

Compliments of the Arizona Interagency Fire Prevention Team. Last up-dated 5/28/00.